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APRIL, 1970
VOL. 2, NO. 1

ZANE GREY

WESTERN MAGAZINE

NEW COMPLETE WESTERN SHORT NOVEL

SHOWDOWN AT LONE TREE

by ROMER ZANE GREY

Laramie Nelson rode into Lone Tree to find a man-killing woman and bring her to justice—a job he hated. And it got worse when a small-scale war broke out and Nelson found himself in a last-ditch fight, side by side with the very woman he pursued!

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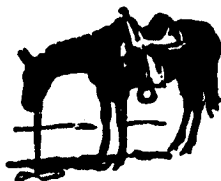
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The English Draw



by JACK RITCHIE

The new marshal didn't have a chance against Stevens in a gunfight—and got ready to skip town. But when the time came, he decided to face the showdown — with remarkable results!

I STEPPED off the east-west stage, set down my carpet bag, and gazed up and down Main Street. I was not at all impressed.

The driver flicked his reins, shouted, and the stage departed in a cloud of alkali dust.

And there I was. Stranded without a cent to my name, and considerably hungry.

From the obvious curiosity of the half dozen loungers, I gathered that it was not a common occurrence

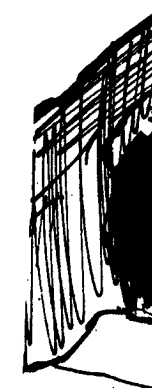
for a stranger to leave the stage at this point.

One of them addressed me. "Young man, the north-south coach doesn't get in for another hour. If that soon."

"Thank you," I said. "But I am not waiting for the north-south stage. I sincerely wish I were."

He weighted my accent. "You British?"

I corrected him. "English." I studied Main Street again. Mike



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O'Leary's Cafe? The Irish I had met in America had seemed positively to cherish their traditional hostility toward Englishmen. Big Joe's? Just how big was Joe?

Marianne's Restaurant?

That was more like it.

I picked up my bag and moved

down the street over occasional boardwalk until I turned into Marianne's Restaurant.

It was cool, quite clean, and, at this time of the day, without customers.

A rawboned boy of approximately sixteen, attired uncomfort-

ably in a white shirt and a black tie, approached me with a handwritten menu. Apparently he was the waiter.

I discovered that the price of dinner would be fifty cents. "Isn't that rather high?"

My waiter defended the price. "We always serve newbaked bread and use clean linen. Not like O'Leary's or Big Joe's."

I reflected that it was rather ridiculous for me to quibble about the cost, since I would be unable to pay for the meal under any circumstances. I ordered.

My waiter disappeared into the kitchen.

I removed a small copy of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* from my pocket and prepared to wait.

I became aware of a young woman at the kitchen door, apparently studying me.

She was in her middle twenties, had violet eyes, and straw-colored hair—or possibly golden—depending upon how one cared to look at it. After a few moments she withdrew to the kitchen.

My waiter rejoined me. "I see you're reading Shakespeare."

I smiled thinly. "I am re-reading Shakespeare."

He nodded. "It's good to reread a thing, just in case you missed something the first time around. My favorite Shakespeare play is *Timon of Athens*."

I regarded him suspiciously. He pointed to a small bookcase.

"That's the town library. Seventy-two volumes. They're all here now. But every other week or so somebody comes in and borrows one for a few days."

He was not disposed to move away. "Marianne's my sister," he said. "We lost our parents six years ago when War Cloud rode out with his pack of renegade braves. My name's Homer." He waited to learn mine.

I sighed. "Darley."

Eventually Homer returned to the kitchen and brought out a tray of steaming food.

I savored the various aromas for a moment and then fell to.

When I finished, I spoke to Homer. "I'd like to see your sister, please."

She appeared. "Is there something wrong, sir?"

"I'm afraid so. I am completely penniless."

She studied me coldly and spoke with feminine logic. "Why didn't you mention that before you ate?"

"Madam," I said, "I may be penniless, but I am not a fool."

"Maybe he could do the dishes?" Homer asked hopefully.

Her eyes went to the Shakespeare volume still on the table. She also took in my broadcloth suit. "You wouldn't happen to be a schoolteacher, by any chance?"

"No," I said. "I have no trade or profession or any other vice and until this moment I never felt the need of one."

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"But you *are* educated, aren't you?"

"Quite."

She glanced at the wall clock. "For the time being, I'd like you to help Homer set some tables together in the middle of the room. We're expecting the town council to meet here in fifteen minutes."

Homer and I began forming a long table.

"The council will probably bring up the subject of the town marshal," Homer said. "We buried him last month. He died with his boots on."

Marianne heard that. "You might explain that Sheriff Evans died quite peacefully in bed. He was eighty-four and never took off his boots, even when he slept."

Homer stood corrected. "Well, anyway, he was a real good man and he kept a tight rein on the drifters, floaters, gunfighters, and proud young hotheads."

I watched Marianne counting out cups. "I understand that your parents were murdered by Indians?"

She blinked. "Why, no. They died of the fever."

Homer was unruffled. "Well, anyway, that happened the same year that War Cloud rode out with his pack of renegade braves." He diverted further attention from himself by pointing to a short plump man entering the restaurant. "That's Mayor Tuller."

At three-thirty, Mayor Tuller called the meeting to order and turned to old business. "Let's face

it, nobody's applied for the marshal's job and nobody's going to. Not at forty dollars a month."

Councilman Flannagan was disposed to differ. "Forty dollars is still a lot of money in my book."

"Not today," Tuller said. "The country is caught in a rising spiral of inflation. I hear that marshals are getting fifty and even seventy-five dollars in some places."

A surly-looking and unkempt individual who had been lounging in the background now spoke up. "I'll take the job if you push the ante to fifty dollars a month. You can't get anybody for less."

I learned later that this was Luke Stevens. He had wandered into town several years previously and picked up a living of sorts by helping out at the livery stable, the blacksmith shop, or whatever came along. He spent most of his free time at the Silver Dollar.

The council silently considered Stevens's offer without any show of enthusiasm.

Marianne stepped forward. "Pardon me for interrupting your deliberations, gentlemen, but just what is required of a town marshal? What does he *do*?"

Tuller scratched his head. "Well, Marianne, old Evans would walk through town at least two or three times a day, except in summer when the sun was high and hot. And then, of course, during the winter months he didn't stray too far from the pot-bellied stove in his office."

Flannagan frowned. "Come to think of it, what do we need a marshal for anyway?"

"It's in the state constitution," Tuller said. "Every incorporated town's got to have a peace officer and we made the mistake of getting incorporated." He grinned at Marianne. "You aren't by any chance applying for the job, are you?"

"No," Marianne said, "However I do believe that Mr. Darley over there is quite interested. And I'm sure he'll do the job for forty dollars a month."

I was about to deny most emphatically that I had even the slightest interest in the position, but then I hesitated. Never come to a snap decision before you have heard all the facts.

I cleared my throat. "Just how did Marshal Evans cope with the drifters, floaters, gunfighters, and proud young hotheads?"

Tuller looked blank. "Don't believe we ever had any like them around here, as far as I remember."

I rubbed my chin. "Forty dollars?"

Tuller nodded. "And you could sleep over at the jailhouse for free. Evans fixed up one of the cells real cozy."

Councilman Flannagan appeared reluctant to trust anyone with an English accent. "What are your qualifications?"

Tuller interposed quickly. "Never mind his qualifications. If he needs the job, let's be big-hearted enough

to give it to him. And besides, it's either him or Luke Stevens."

That settled the matter as far as the council was concerned and I had the position.

Tuller rubbed his hands. "Now suppose we all step over to the Silver Dollar and celebrate the occasion with . . ." He caught Marianne's eye and changed his mind. "Come to think of it, let's all have some coffee and cake. On me, of course."

Luke Stevens did not join us. He glared at me for a few seconds and then stalked out the door.

When I took possession of the marshal's office, Homer accompanied me, carrying my carpetbag.

The building was quite ramshackle and the air inside stale. I finally succeeded in opening a few windows which appeared never to have been opened before.

Homer's interest was drawn to the late marshal's revolver hanging in its holster on a wall peg.

He pulled the gun from the holster and examined it. The barrel was rusty and the holster itself dry and cracked.

"I suggest that you put the revolver back where it belongs," I said. "Firearms are not playthings."

"It's all right," Homer said. "Marshal Evans never kept it loaded." He thumbed back the hammer and triggered off an imaginary shot. "You got to learn the fast draw, Mr. Darley. Your life may

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I did manage to get Uncle Harry."

Homer was impressed. "You killed him?"

"Not quite. However I did inflict considerable pain. His manservant tweezered fourteen pellets of number six shot from various parts of his anatomy, principally the *gluteus maximus*."

Homer whistled. "I'll bet your Uncle Harry had a lot to say about that."

"Actually, he said practically nothing worth repeating. He merely changed his will, handed me five hundred pounds in cash, and pointed in a general westerly direction. I have been traveling ever since."

That night I slept quite soundly in the former marshal's cell and woke considerably refreshed.

I pinned the badge of my office to my coat, regarded the marshal's gun dubiously; then shrugged and strapped the weapon to my waist.

I walked over to Marianne's Restaurant for breakfast.

Homer regarded me without full approval. "You ought to wear the holster low and tied down. That's how it's done in Tombstone. You could break an elbow trying the fast draw from waist high."

I hung up my hat. "I have been to Tombstone. Those people who choose to carry guns either thrust them into their belts or into a pocket of their coats."

Homer gave that thought. "Ever been to Dodge City?"

"No."

depend on it. I don't suppose you ever shot a man?"

I was searching for a broom. "As a matter of fact, I have."

He gaped.

"I, too, am something of an orphan," I said. "Taken in by my Uncle Harry and cared for by a succession of Nannys. Upon taking my degree at the university, I confidently looked forward to the long and tranquil life of a country gentleman. Unfortunately, one misty morning I allowed Uncle Harry to cajole me into accompanying him on a quail shoot."

I sighed at the memory of it. "Uncle Harry and I set out early. The visibility was poor, and after a bit I lost sight of him. The dogs took that moment to flush a covey. I swung about — rather low, I'll now admit — and blasted away. Missed every one of the birds, but

"Well, that's the place I was really thinking about. They wear their guns low."

I flipped open the lid of my watch and studied it significantly. "Aren't you going to be late for school?"

"I'm all through with school," Homer said firmly. "I graduated two years ago."

Marianne appeared with table napkins. "School here doesn't go beyond the eighth grade. Homer was valedictorian of his graduating class."

Homer turned defensive. "I don't know how it happened."

"He finds it hard to live down," Marianne said, "especially with the boys down at the livery stable."

I regarded Homer with renewed interest. "What do you intend doing with your life?"

He spoke without any great enthusiasm. "I guess I'll just stick around and officially own half the restaurant when I'm twenty-one. At least that's the way Marianne has it figured."

She nodded, but absently. "Homer tells me that you have a degree from Cambridge?"

"Oxford," I said quite a bit stiffly.

She regarded me thoughtfully. "It's true that we have no secondary schools here, but you don't suppose it would be possible for me to employ someone to tutor Homer so that he might pass college entrance requirements? Someone who is qualified by virtue of education and

intelligence to teach? I couldn't afford to spend any large sum of money, but perhaps for meals . . .?"

She let the sentence hang in the air. And she was not speculating, she was asking.

I considered the request, deciding that her hair was golden, not straw, as I had imagined.

Homer could see what was coming. "Now, look, I've had just about all the book-learning I can stand."

But his protest was futile and Marianne and I formulated a program for tutoring Homer during those hours when the restaurant was not busy.

After breakfast and Homer's first lesson, I stepped outside for a leisurely tour of the town, with Homer following disconsolately at my heels.

At the Silver Dollar, Luke Stevens stepped through the swinging doors and placed himself directly in my path.

Apparently he had been brooding about being passed over for the marshal's job. He hooked two thumbs in his belt, rocked a bit, and glared. "I don't like you, mister. I'll bet you think you're better'n me?"

I expressed surprise. "Doesn't everybody?"

I realized almost immediately that I had uttered the wrong words, especially since Luke had a long-barreled Peacemaker under his belt.

"Apologize, mister," he roared. "Or I'm calling you out!"

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threatening a law enforcement official? A town marshal? A public employee?"

"Just the real you," he growled. "So take off the badge and we'll settle this personal, man to man."

I felt a distinct coldness in the pit of my stomach. The male Darleys have the habit of dying in foreign lands for reasons personal and political, but this soon?

A dozen bystanders scattered rapidly for positions of safety, without however, impairing their views of the coming event.

"Hold it, Luke," Homer said. "You two will have to put this off until the first of the month."

We looked at him — I rather hopefully.

"I mean that the winner has to pay the funeral expenses of the loser," Homer said. "That's the Code of the West. In most places, anyway. And Marshal Darley doesn't have a cent to his name. He won't have until he gets paid the first of the month."

I quickly agreed. "If I put a bullet between your eyes, Luke — as I undoubtedly would — and I were unable to pay for your funeral, I could never forgive myself." I shook my head. "Sorry, Luke. We meet on the first of the month. That's the best I can offer. Take it or leave it."

Luke Stevens had trouble believing his ears. "Huh?"

"It's the Code of the West," I reiterated solemnly.

Possibly his sojourn at the Silver Dollar had something to do with his decision. He grinned evilly. "All right, mister. Maybe I'll just play along with you. The first of the month it is. And let's make it high noon."

Homer and I retreated to my office.

Homer examined his fingernails. "We talked Luke out of that. For now. But I guess the only thing for you to do is leave town."

I rejected that. Until the first of the month, at least. I pulled my revolver from its holster, which took a few squeaking moments and examined it. Oiling was obviously called for.

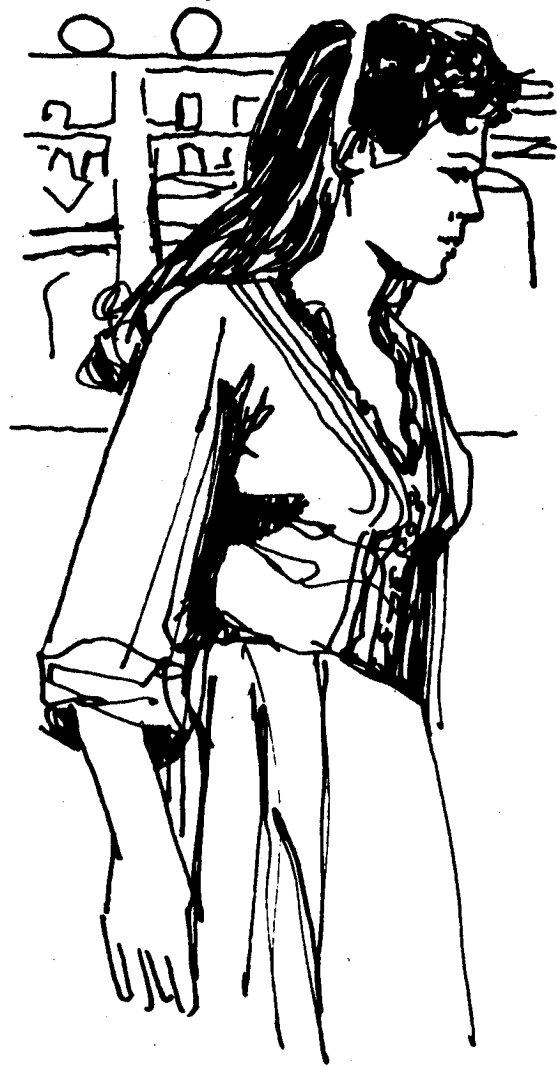
After that was done, I found a tin of saddle soap and worked the lubricant into the leather holster.

When I thought I had restored a small amount of pliability to the leather, I returned the revolver to the holster, crouched, and whipped out the gun.

Homer yawned. "The form is good, but the time is terrible. Anyway, the proof is in the shooting. You got to be able to hit something."

I agreed and sent Homer over to the Silver Dollar for half a dozen empty bottles. We set them up on rocks behind the jailhouse.

I performed my version of the fast draw and blazed away. It was immediately apparent that the bottles, as far as my accuracy was con-



cerned, had a good chance for immortality.

I found that rather disappointing, considering that I am a fair shot with a rifle.

I checked my cartridge belt. "I seem to have shot away the only revolver bullets the late marshal left behind." I holstered my weapon. "There remain only two alternatives. Either I leave town, or I shall have to shoot Luke Stevens in the back."

The latter possibility shocked Homer. "They'd hang even a mar-

shal for doing a thing like that. You got to meet him face to face."

I was a bit irritated. "Just what the devil does a face-to-face confrontation have to do with the right or wrong of any matter? It will merely prove that one of us is the fastest with a gun, the most accurate, or, I strongly suspect, the luckiest."

Homer agreed. "But still, it's the western way of doing things and you happen to be in the west."

That night I slept fitfully upon my dilemma and came up with no face-saving solution.

As I prepared to leave the office for breakfast, my eye was drawn to the window and the livery stable beyond.

I watched Luke Stevens swing onto a saddle roan, apply a light spur, and canter past the office.

I reached speculatively for one of the rifles in the wall rack.

As Luke reached the end of Main Street and headed into open country I leveled the rifle sights to his back.

The temptation to pull the trigger was strong, but I put the rifle down.

And yet, I thought, the idea should not be *entirely* discarded.

I took the rifle with me as I crossed the street to the livery stable and borrowed a horse.

When I left town, I could still see Luke near the horizon. I followed, maintaining the distance and keeping out of sight as much as possible.

After twenty minutes of riding,

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Luke dismounted and tied his horse to one of the scrub trees. He pulled a shotgun from the saddle scabbard and disappeared into the brush.

I swung out of my saddle and cautiously walked my horse in Luke's direction. When I saw Luke next, he was approximately a hundred yards ahead of me bending over a rabbit he'd just shot.

I raised my rifle and sighted carefully. I had no intention of killing Luke or even wounding him. But I did want to frighten Hades out of him.

My shot spun the high-crowned hat from his head.

His mouth dropped open in astonishment and his hand flew automatically to his head — apparently to establish whether it was still there or not.

I ducked back into the brush, mounted my horse, and rode swiftly back to town.

I was browsing through the volumes in the book alcove at Marianne's Restaurant and waiting for breakfast when Luke Stevens came stamping in.

He glared. "I been looking all over for you."

I stared up at the two holes in his hat — going in and coming out. "Really?"

He pinioned me with narrowed eyes. "Somebody just took a shot at me."

I nodded sympathetically. "If you'll give me his name, as town

marshal, I'll speak to him about the matter immediately."

He leaned forward threateningly. "All you have to do is look in the nearest mirror."

I was innocence personified. "Are you insinuating that I shot at you?"

Stevens was primed for immediate action. "What I'm saying is that we'd better get our shoot-out over with right now . . . before I get accidentally shot in the back."

Marianne and Homer had been listening and now Marianne spoke up. "There will be no shooting in this restaurant. And just what makes you think that Marshal Darley is the only person in town who wants to see you dead? I'm sure there must be dozens. And further more, Sheriff Darley hasn't left this room in the last hour. Isn't that right, Homer?"

Homer blinked and then agreed. "Maybe longer."

Marianne pressed on. "If you shoot the marshal, Homer and I will swear that it was cold-blooded murder. And seeing as how we're the only witnesses, I think you'd get hung."

Luke Stevens took in the existing situation and backed down reluctantly. "All right. I can't fight all of you. But I'm keeping my eyes open from now on. And I won't scare off before the first, Darley. When the day comes, you'd better be ready."

He backed out of the door.

There was half a minute's silence and then Homer said, "Did you

really take that shot at him, Mr. Darley?"

I became immensely interested in the bookcase.

He tried again. "I guess he won't scare off?"

I had come to that conclusion myself. "Where is your set of Shakespeare?"

"We don't have a set," Homer said. "Just *Timon of Athens*."

Marianne wiped her hands on her apron. "And now we'll get you breakfast and then it's time for Homer's lesson."

The first of the month came inexorably.

I woke at daybreak with definite plans to be out of town considerably before noon. The previous evening, after a bit of dickering, I had bargained my gold watch for a horse and accouterments. At the moment, the animal was tethered at the rear of the jailhouse.

I debated whether I should have breakfast at Marianne's before I left.

No. Better to leave without good-byes.

I went outside, saddled the horse, and then returned to the office. I packed my meager belongings into my carpetbag.

I was ready to go.

And yet I lingered — straightening the office and finding various things that needed cleaning or rearrangement.

Seven o'clock. Eight. Nine.

The street door opened and

Homer made an appearance. His eyes went to the carpetbag. "I guess you're leaving?"

I avoided his eyes. "I'm afraid so."

He nodded. "That's the only sensible thing to do." He glanced idly about the office and softly began whistling *Britannia Rules the Waves*. Somewhat sarcastically, I thought.

"Look, Homer," I said with some asperity, "I am not a coward. I am simply prudent. A trait which I inherited from an ancestor who broke his leg on the playing fields of Eton, and thus missed Waterloo."

The door opened again and this time it was Marianne. She carried a wicker basket. "You didn't have breakfast this morning. I have a pot of coffee and waffles here. You'd better eat while things are warm. And then I think you'd better be going." She looked away. "Even if it does mean saying goodbye, I much prefer having you alive."

Two sharp pistol shots sounded outside.

We stared at each other and then went to a window.

Luke Stevens stood in the middle of the street near the Silver Dollar.

I glanced at the wall clock. Not even nine-fifteen. Either Stevens couldn't tell time or he had only a vague notion of what constituted high noon.

"All right, Darley," Stevens roared. "Come out of there and face me, man to man!"

Marianne took my arm. "Quick!

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You'd better go out the back way. You have a horse out there, don't you?"

I found myself blushing. Probably the whole town knew that I had a horse out there.

Luke Stevens fired another shot into the air.

I looked at Marianne — the golden hair, the violet eyes.

Over her shoulder I caught sight of myself in the wall mirror.

You don't look particularly prudent, I thought.

I stared at my reflection and I felt a new and surprising sensation developing within me.

Courage?

It grew, it prospered.

I took a manful breath of air and strode over to the wall peg. I took down the gunbelt and strapped it on.

Marianne's eyes widened. "You can't possibly go through with this!"

I smiled tightly. "My dear Marianne, this is something that I must do."

Homer had a change of heart. "I feel kind of guilty about how this is turning out. Maybe I could cover you at the window with a rifle."

Nobly I rejected the offer.

I stepped out of the office and took a position in the center of the street. I faced Luke Stevens, approximately fifty yards away.

He grinned and shoved his revolver back into his waistband. He moved slowly toward me, one hand poised above the butt of the weapon.

"Draw any time you're ready."

Despite my new courage, I licked rather dry lips.

The distance between us decreased. Forty yards. Thirty, Twenty.

I could put it off no longer. My hand went for my gun.

Rather surprisingly, I managed to pull it out of the holster before being wounded or dead and I saw immediately why.

The front sight of Stevens's revolver had caught in the waistband of his trousers. He cursed and tugged.

I leveled my revolver, but I did not pull the trigger.

With sudden horror I realized that I had no cartridges in my gun. Not having planned to participate in this event, I had never purchased any.

I felt distinctively ill about the whole matter, especially since Stevens appeared to have freed his gun.

A shot from behind me whistled past my ear and the revolver spun from Luke Stevens' hand. Another shot removed his much abused hat, and a third sent him sprawling.

I glanced back over my shoulder. The sun glinted momentarily on a rifle barrel at an open window of my office.

I turned back to Luke Stevens.

He sat up, his face white, and apparently he believed that the shots had come from my gun. He held up a hand. "No more. I had it. This is the end of the shootout."

I holstered my weapon and moved toward him, expecting to find him sorely wounded, but an examination disclosed that he had suffered no more than a stinging hand. The shot which had felled him had merely clipped the heel from one of his boots.

I patted the butt of my revolver significantly. "I hope you learned your lesson?"

"Yes, sir," he said swiftly. "Yes, sir, I did. And I won't never cause no trouble again."

He picked up what remained of his hat and hobbled toward the Silver Dollar.

I walked back to the office and the smell of gunpowder.

"Thank you, Homer," I said. "I really needed that."

He blushed modestly. "I suddenly remembered that you didn't have any bullets."

Marianne took the napkin off the wicker basket. "And now I wish you'd finish your breakfast and then we can get on to Homer's lesson."

It took almost eighteen months before I felt that he was ready for the newly founded university at the state capital.

When he finished taking the special entrance examinations, I met him outside the chancellor's office.

"Well?"

"They're taking me," he said.

We sat down on a hall bench.

"While you were in there," I said, "I have not exactly been idle myself. For your information, I am now employed by the university to teach Freshman English. Naturally, in time, I hope to do better."

As we sat there, my mind drifted back over the previous year and a half.

Marianne had seen to it that Homer never missed a lesson and she had remained constantly at his elbow while I taught.

I had felt rather flattered by her continued presence, suspecting that Homer's education was not the only reason she was there. This feeling became a certainty when our association culminated in what had so far been a very happy marriage.

However at this particular moment I wondered if perhaps she had not had one other reason for always being on hand during Homer's lessons.

An office door down the hall opened and Marianne came out smiling. "I passed the tests. I am now officially a freshman."

The state university is one of those institutions experimenting with co-education.

Personally, I don't believe the idea will ever catch on.

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